

**Learn More about the Outreach Community  
Inventory Resources and Assets**

<b>Date of Visit:</b>	November 11, 2005
<b>Outreach Partners</b>	High School Library and Health Science Library
<b>Target Community</b>	The target community is students and faculty at Health Careers High School in South Texas. A secondary community is composed of the family members of these students. We anticipate that students will access MedlinePlus material for their families.
<b>Primary Contact(s)</b>	Ms. Head Librarian; Ms. Administrative Assistant, 101-010-1010
<b>Activities</b>	Demonstration and discussion with all three librarians. Four focus groups: one with juniors and seniors; one with freshmen and sophomores, one with faculty. Interview with school principal.

**Who are the primary contacts for the project?**

- Who has the authority to make priorities and enforce plans?*

The principal, Ms. Principal, is the person with the final authority on whether this outreach project can be conducted at the school. She met with the health science and school librarians on the day of the demonstration and expressed her enthusiasm to have Health Careers High be involved in a project with the Regional Academic Health Center which houses the health science library. She did say she wanted the head school librarian to present the project at the next school board meeting.
- Who is the best day-to-day contact (the person who is there frequently and returns phone calls)?*

The head librarian who is on our outreach team is very conscientious about returning phone calls.
- Who seem to be the potential innovators and early adopters?*

We predict the students will be the early adopters. Computers and the Internet are their preferred method for seeking information and they have the most to benefit from having access to good health information. The school librarians have proven to be the innovators. They already use Medline Plus when putting together resources for health science teachers.

## Resources and assets

- How do different groups in the community respond to learning about your online resources?*

The librarians are very enthusiastic about introducing the school community to MedlinePlus. They see it as far superior to the online consumer health resources they currently use. The students seemed enthusiastic. They find search engines like Google very frustrating to use because the bad or unrelated Websites are not filtered out. They are limited to the number of citations their teachers will allow in their research papers. Teachers confirmed that they limit use of the Internet for papers because they cannot monitor the quality of materials that students find on the Internet.
- Can you identify possible co-facilitators who you will train to help you with outreach activities?*

The school librarians will certainly be co-facilitators. However, the school has had success with peer tutoring in the technology lab, where students teach other students. We are considering use of that model for the outreach project.
- Did the people you talked to seem to offer advice of how to involve the community? Did they have ideas of where your online resource could be taught?*

We got a number of suggestions for training: freshman orientation, open house (parents will be exposed to MedlinePlus as well as faculty, staff, and students). The health science teachers seemed amenable to having training sessions in their classes as students prepare for research projects. Many of the students belong to Health Occupations Students of America and compete in HOSA events. MedlinePlus could be presented at HOSA meetings.

## Current status of health information access

- How are community members now getting health information?*

The students use Google or other general search engines. One student mentioned WebMD. For papers, the teachers often have the librarians pull together print resources for the students to use.
- How do they feel about the quality of the information they get?*

Teachers are not impressed with the quality of the online materials in general for research purposes. They are very happy with the resources that the librarians gather for them. Students say the general search engines yield a lot of useless links that they have to "wade through."
- Will the resources you are introducing be better or more difficult to use compared to their different approaches?*

We predict that every group will find MedlinePlus superior to current methods. We plan to do some training with teachers so they understand that all Websites and materials at MedlinePlus go through expert review before they are made available to the public. We know the students will find it superior to the general search engines. The teachers probably will find that looking up health information on their own and allowing students to use MedlinePlus will be much more convenient than their current practices.

**Current status of computer experience**

- *What groups are experienced with computers and the Internet?*  
The students and school librarians are very experienced with using the Internet. The teachers use it as well, but admit the students often teach them how to use technology.
- *What groups are learning to use the computer?*  
Students told us that some of their parents and grandparents are learning to use the computers.
- *What groups are likely to have a difficult time using the computer or the Internet? Are there other community members who can help them?*  
Some parents and many grandparents we encounter at open house will probably struggle with the computer (or not use it at all). We expect the students to get information for these family members.

**Level of computer access**

- *Where can community members get computer access?*  
The library has over 25 computer stations in the reference area and the library's technology lab. The school is open from 7:30 am to 7:00 p.m. to students, faculty and staff. The library is also open all summer at the same hours with the exception of Fridays. The library is not open to the general public, but students may bring their family members to use the computers.
- *How many have access from home?*  
Most students in our focus groups had computers and Internet access at home. Our librarians estimate 60% of all students have home computers.
- *Describe any technology centers available to the community.*  
The library's technology lab is available for training whenever the library is open. Usually training sessions are held immediately after school. The lab is very convenient to the school community and the library has it's own IT staff to deal with computer problems. The Internet is usually up and running.
- *Is there any type of training or assistance to residents who want to use the computers?*  
All of the faculty and students have adequate computer skills to learn to use MedlinePlus. However, the school does not provide training for family members like parents and grandparents.

**Describe other aspects of the community that might affect the outreach project**

- *What do both partners have to offer?*

The school librarians have easy access to the school community. The teachers think highly of them and trust them, so if the school librarians endorse MedlinePlus for research purposes, the teachers are likely to accept it. The library has excellent IT support for the computer systems. The health science librarian on the team has a lot of experience with teaching online resources. She also has funding to purchase supplies for the project.

- *Is either partner in the collaboration attempting to secure funding?*

The health science librarian currently has a contract from the National Library of Medicine to fund this project. No other funding is being sought for this outreach site.

- *What is needed for outreach to occur?*

Most of the resources are available for the project. We need to gain teacher “buy-in” to our outreach efforts. We also must go through some school system procedures before the health science librarian can work directly with students.

- *Do you foresee any challenges to completing an outreach project here?*

We are planning to train students to tutor other people and our biggest challenge will be to find the right students. First, we hope students will want to be involved. Second, we want students who can handle the extra responsibility of being a peer tutor without struggling in school. We plan to get recommendations from the principal and guidance counselor.